

## It's Nice to have a Friend by mayfixlds

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**Summary:**

but for now, he's going to sit and drink milkshakes with a friend.

## It's Nice to have a Friend

### Author's Note:

This was written as part of the [Hawkins Holiday Hiatus](#) on tumblr :) I hope you enjoy it!

“Open up, you piece of shit!” Mike shouts, banging the palms of his hands against the doors of the *Palace Arcade*. The place was dark, and the usual buzz of a Friday night was missing.

“Hey dingus, I don’t think anyone is home” he hears from behind him, and he spins noticing Robin, car keys in hand, still wearing her *Family Video* uniform.

“Yeah, I can see that” he snaps, giving the door one more slap for good measure, before stepping away and sighing. He starts to head back toward his bike but before he can reach it, Robin speaks again

“Wait” she says, walking closer toward him “Aren’t you one of Steve’s kids?”

He rolls his eyes and begins to unlock his bike “I don’t think Steve Harrington should be trusted with actual children” but he gives her a smile as she reaches him

“Mike, right?” she asks, “Nancy’s brother?” he nods, not particularly surprised that she remembered. Fighting a huge fleshy Mind Flayer monster forged bonds that could never be broken.

“Hi, Robin” he finally greets her properly “You got stuck on the late shift, huh?”

“Yep” she exaggerates the p, as if she’s popping bubble gum “So, why were you trying to break down the doors to the arcade?” she raises her eyebrows “Who died?”

“No one. Nothing. I just-” he shrugs, looking down at his feet and kicking at the gravel “I just needed to get out of the house” he gestures half-heartedly toward the arcade.

"They closed early today" she explains, following his movement  
"Something to do with faulty electrics"

"Great" he mutters, kicking at the ground again

"You hungry?"

"What?"

"Are you hungry?" she repeats "I was going to grab a burger after work. Wanna come?"

*What the hell, he thinks, it beats being at home.*

Robin helps him to lift his bike into the back of her truck, before sliding into the driver's seat and starting the engine. He hops into the passenger side, and she pulls out of the parking lot. *I Wanna Dance With Somebody* rings out from the radio and the upbeat melody exists in contrast to Mike's mood. He hadn't thought much once he left his house, just focusing on getting as far away from his parents as possible and not getting hit off his bike. He'd let the motions of peddling take over and before he knew it, he'd arrived at the arcade, where his thoughts had slowly started to seep in until now where they were hitting like a landslide.

*The evening had started out innocently enough, Mike sat on the couch with his mom, his dad in the armchair with Holly asleep in his lap. Nancy was away on a small vacation with Jonathan.*

*"They're everywhere these days" his dad said, gesturing to the TV. They were running a news article about how in some areas of California, more anti-discrimination laws had been put in place to protect gay people "Seems as though everyone knows a queer now"*

*"There's nothing wrong with it, Dad" he'd muttered, clenching and unclenching his fists in his lap*

*"I didn't say there was, Michael" his dad comments "I just don't think we need to see it everywhere. It's a bad influence, imagine if your sister grows up seeing this all over the television screen"*

*"I agree" his mom chimes in "It does seem to be shoved down our throats a lot lately"*

*Mike rolled his eyes "Like I said, there's nothing wrong with it. Maybe she'd actually learn something from this hunk of shit" he gestures toward the TV*

*"Language"*

*"There is nothing wrong with it" His mom says "But it doesn't concern me, so why should I care? It's none of your business"*

*"Well, what if it was your business" Mike blurts out before he can stop himself "What if it was one of your friends, or family, or – what if it was one of your children? What if I-" he cuts himself short*

*His mom gives him a look he can't quite discern*

*A silence.*

*A pause.*

*"Mike, what are you saying-" she finally asks*

*"I don't-I mean- I need to go" he manages, jumping up from the couch and sprinting to the entry way. He grabs his backpack he'd dumped earlier when he'd gotten home hanging out with Lucas and Dustin and pulls open the front door.*

*Ignoring his mom calling his name, he runs outside, grabbing his bike from the driveway and peddling out into the night.*

*He's pulled out of his thoughts around ten minutes later when they*

pull up outside the diner that had opened in the spot where *Benny's Burgers* had been. It had been an empty lot for a good few years after Benny had died, but a few months after the events of Starcourt Mall, the town council had decided it was time to once and for all clean up Hawkins, renovating all the closed down places and bringing the town back to life. Mike had been sceptical at first, Hawkins was falling apart long before any Demogorgon came to play, but he had to admit the efforts of an office that wasn't under Kline really had brought the town back to life.

They're taken to their table by a blonde waitress called Kelly. She has a warm smile, and friendly tone as she hands them their menu's and tells them to shout her when they're ready to order. They sit in silence for a while, scanning the menu – even though they both agreed they'd come in for a burger. Mike assumes Robin was just being polite and giving him a little time to himself after his outburst at the arcade.

It's after they'd ordered, and their milkshakes arrived that she finally gives in to her curiosity

"So" Robin starts, taking a sip of her milkshake "What's wrong?"

"What?" Mike asks "I was under the impression we came here to eat burgers, not talk about our feelings"

"Why can't we do both?" she retorts, raising her eyebrows

"Because I *don't want to*"

"Mike, I know we don't."

She's interrupted by the waitress bringing their food. Mike angrily stabs at one of his fries, earning a sarcastic '*who eats fries with a fork*' comment from Robin, before he sighs, and gives in to her earlier questions.

"Fine" he says "I had a fight with my parents" he admits, picking up

another one of his fries, this time with his fingers.

“What about?” she asks, biting into her burger

“It doesn’t matter” he mutters “It’s not that important”

“I mean from the state you were in when I found you outside the arcade says otherwise” she retorts “You really didn’t look good”

“Thanks” he rolls his eyes “

She holds up her hands in defence “I’m just saying” she pauses, before sighing “Look, Mike, you look like you need someone to talk too, and I’m thinking there might be a reason why you didn’t go running to one of your friends instead of the arcade”

She’s right, he admits. He hadn’t really hung out with Robin a lot since their showdown at the mall, but from the few times he did, and not to mention all the times that Steve and Dustin spoke about how cool she is, he had figured her to be quite intuitive. She knew how to read a situation and the best way to try and help it. It only made sense for her to be doing that now, too. He racks his brain for a way to explain the situation, without going into specifics. No matter how cool she is, he doesn’t think he can handle another negative reaction this evening.

“You know Will? Byers?” he starts, carefully testing the waters “You met him at the mall with the rest of us, but they moved away a few months after” he takes a bite into his burger

She nods in agreement “Dustin mentions him sometimes, whenever you go to visit, or he comes here. He came into the store to rent a movie with his sister, I think. The one with the...*abilities*” she lowers her tone at the end of the sentence, popping more fries into her mouth and looking around to make sure no one is eavesdropping

Mike smiles “El” he says in confirmation

“Your girlfriend, right?”

“Ex-girlfriend”

“Oh, I’m sorry” she says awkwardly

He waves a hand “No, it’s okay. She’s my best friend, and it’s better for us that way” he smiles, and Robin reciprocates “Besides, there’s someone else. Maybe. It’s difficult”

“Was this what caused the argument with your parents?” she prompts, and her eyes are soft, encouraging, and they make him feel *safe* “Do they not approve of her?”

“Something like that” he mutters

“Now *that* I can relate too” she says nonchalant, rolling her eyes

He frowns “What do you mean?” he asks

“Your parents not approving of who you’re dating” she says “They hated the last girl I dated. It was so awkward every time she came over” she mentions casually as she finishes the last of her milkshake

It takes a minute for her words to sink in. He feels his eyes widen

“Wait, the last *girl* you were dating?”

“Is that a problem?” she asks, an understandable edge to her tone. Mike hadn’t thought through how his words would’ve sounded.

“No” he reassures quickly “No, of course not. I just didn’t know you were-that you liked-“

“That I’m gay?” She raises an eyebrow “Wow, Harrington really did keep his promise not to tell anyone”

“As much as I love to give Steve Harrington shit, he *does* deserve a lot more credit than that”

“I know” she sighs “It’s just hard sometimes, to share something so personal about yourself. Especially when you can never truly know how they’re going to react”

“Are your parents not cool with you being gay?” he pauses “Wait, you don’t have to answer that. We don’t have to talk about this if you

don't want to”

She takes a little longer to respond this time, pursing her lips as she thinks.

“They are” she says finally, taking another sip of her milkshake “My mom wasn’t, not at first. It took a while for her to come around to the idea. My dad was great, though. He asked me so many questions so that he could fully understand, and he helped me with talking to my mom. She eventually apologised, and we are good now, but it was hard telling them. It was really scary, actually.” She gives him a nervous smile.

He’s grateful for how much she had just shared with him. He knows that it’s not easy, especially as they don’t know each other terribly well. He hopes she knows how much he appreciates what she’s shared, and it makes him want to share a little bit, too.

He steadies himself, taking a breath.

He takes another breath. Exhales.

“I know how that feels” he admits

“Oh?” she asks, taking another bite of her burger

“The someone else? It’s not a girl” he mumbles

“Oh”

*It’s okay*, he reassures himself, *you can do this*.

“It’s Will” he tells her “Well, kinda? I realised how I felt about him not long after they left, when I realised that whilst I did miss El, I



missed him *more*. I spent so much time hating myself, being mad at myself, thinking that I was betraying El for not feeling that way about her anymore. Eventually she asked me why I was being weird, so we spoke about it and she's been the *best*. And me and Will have spoken, too. I told him how I felt, more because I needed to get it out, not because I thought he'd feel the same but he *does*, and now we're taking it slow"

He gives her a moment, waiting for her reply. He watches as his words sink in.

"So, firstly, thank you for trusting me with that" she says, tone sincere

"Thank you for trusting me with your story, too" he smiles at her  
"And for being so great tonight. I really appreciate it"

"So" she says, putting the last piece of her burger into her mouth  
"Did you tell your parents about Will tonight?"

"Not exactly? My dad was making comments about how *queer people* are apparently *everywhere*."

"Ah" she adds. He gives her an exasperated nod as if to say, '*I know, right?*'

"Yep" he pops the p "Normally I just try to grit my teeth and sit through it, but this time I don't know – something in me just *snapped*, and before I knew it I was telling them about me. The second my mom realised what I was saying I just seized up, grabbed my bag and my shoes and ran. Didn't stick around for their actual reaction"

"And that's why you wanted to go to the arcade" she states

He nods again "Yeah. Just wanted something else to occupy my brain for a few hours, before I had to go home and face whatever it is they're going to say"

She sighs "I'm not going to sit here and say that it's going to be absolutely fine when you walk through the door."

"Gee, thanks" he jokes, rolling his eyes

“-but I’m here if you need anything. I know Steve would be, too *and* your little nerd friends. This whole thing, who you are, it can feel like the most difficult and isolating thing in the whole world and sharing that with other people is terrifying, especially when they don’t have the attitude, we want them to have. I just want you to know, though, that we’re all here for you no matter what and most importantly please remember that there is *nothing wrong with you*”

“I do know that” he tells her “It’s taken a while, but I *do*”

“That’s good” she smiles “Please try to remember that. No matter what they say”

He’s silent for a little while. Letting the comfort of her words sink in, trying to find an adequate way to tell her how much what she had said had meant to him, but when he struggles to find anything good enough, he settles on a simple “Thank you” and tries to put as much emphasis behind it that she’ll understand. From the sincere smile she gives him, he thinks she does.

“So, as much as I love discussing our feelings, after all that heavy talk, I think we deserve another milkshake” Robin says, wiping at her mouth with a paper napkin “What do you think?”

“Absolutely”

He doesn’t know what is waiting for him at home; his worries about what his parents are going to say haven’t magically vanished over the course of dinner, of course not, but he *does* feel better. It’s only slight, but it’s there. The only other person he knows who is like him is Will, and whilst they can talk about this together, it’s nice to know it’s not just them against the world- that there *are* other people who have similar but positive stories. People who are supported, and people who will support them and it causes a feeling of fullness in his chest, and he doesn’t feel so alone anymore.

He knows when he gets home that he has parents to confront, and a boy to call but for now, he’s going to sit, and drink milkshakes with a

friend.

**Author's Note:**

Thanks for reading! You can follow me on  
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